



Connecting People with Nature since 1920

156 Ramapo Valley Road • Mahwah, NJ 07430 • T 201.512.9348 • F 201.512.9012 • [www.nynjtc.org](http://www.nynjtc.org)

March 17, 2010

Chairman John Piazza  
and Planning Board Members  
Mamakating Town Hall  
2948 Route 209  
Wurtsboro, NY 12790

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference has had a long and active interest in protecting the land that is targeted for development as 7 Peaks on Mountain Road. The ridgetop parcel is a critical link in one of our signature projects—creation of a 40-mile trail along the Shawangunk Ridge that would be a recreation resource for residents and an attraction for visitors.

Our vision is for the Shawangunk Ridge Trail (SRT) to connect with communities along the way via local trail networks (such as the D&H Canal) and to link with existing and new trail networks including the National Scenic Appalachian Trail, the Long Path, trails in New Jersey on the Kittatinny Ridge, and trails in the Catskills.

At present, the SRT skirts the ridgetop in this area, instead following an abandoned rail bed in the valley below, along the Basha Kill at the base of the western slope. We hope that one day this rail-trail will connect to a continuation of the Shawangunk Ridge Trail at the top of the ridge. Such a connection between two major natural areas—the Basha Kill Wildlife Management Area and the Shawangunk Ridge—will be an extraordinary recreation and tourist resource for the area.

We therefore regret that any development is proposed for this site as it inevitably will have adverse impact on the natural and recreational resources and views of and from the ridge corridor. Given the importance of the Shawangunk Ridge—identified as a priority area for open space conservation by the State of New York—it seems an inappropriate location for yet another collection of big houses.

In addition, the area's susceptibility to wildfire, acknowledged in this DEIS (3.11-1), and its centrality to the area's appeal for outdoor recreation tourism (2.21), also acknowledged, seem to further make the case for leaving the land undeveloped and selection of the No Action Alternative

Short of that, the Trail Conference makes the following comments on this DEIS:

- We endorse DEC's judgment that the Conservation Alternative as detailed in this DEIS is inadequate, and urge planners to require full compliance with DEC's requests and recommendations.
- We urge planners to carefully review and take into consideration the environmental and economic assessments by the skilled professionals commissioned by the Basha Kill Area Association.

- We urge that this DEIS be required to assess the *combined* impact of all three planned development stages.
- We appreciate identification of a public trail corridor on this site and the promise of access to it. We urge that the corridor for the trail be widened so as to preserve the natural, backcountry experience even as it passes by the development. We also request that accommodation be included for appropriate trail signage when the trail is constructed.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Wheelock  
West Hudson Regional Representative